

# *The Wisconsin Statewide Mammal Inventory*

In 1952, H.T. Jackson finished field work on Wisconsin's first statewide mammal inventory. Over fifty years of insufficient funding and competing priorities have passed, and along with it much of our knowledge on the distribution and status of nearly 40 of our 69 native mammal species.

With the aid of State Wildlife Grant money, the DNR has begun the task of repeating Jackson's work, but this time with the aid of modern study designs and survey equipment, computerized databases, GIS, and even genetic testing. We are focusing on the distribution and status of nongame and unprotected species such as shrews, weasels, ground squirrels, chipmunks, mice, lemmings, and voles.



*Red-backed vole.*

We have active partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, University of Wisconsin, Natural Heritage Inventory, and NatureMapping (a citizen monitoring program). We have secured over \$123,500 in cash and state salary to bolster State Wildlife Grant money used on this project. The start-up costs in dollars and staff time have been significant, so we are making every effort to ensure that maintenance of current information is a priority in the years to come.

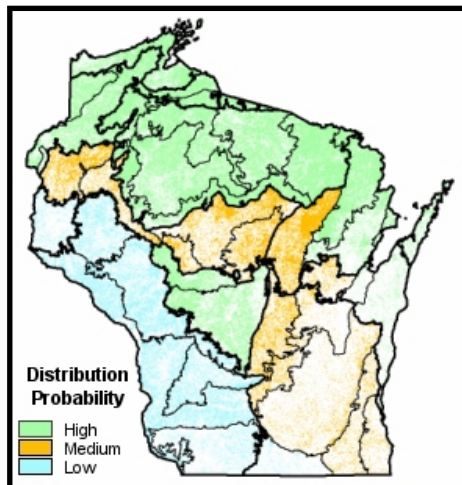


Figure 1. Potential distribution of the red-backed vole in Wisconsin based on historic records, research projects, and projections of suitable habitat.

## **Accomplishments:**

- ✓ Museum records and historic range maps have been converted into electronic databases to provide context for new data. We have mapped predicted mammal distributions based on recent research, anecdotal data, and basic habitat models (Figure 1).
- ✓ Project partners and volunteers have been trained and equipped for field inventories. We provide technical assistance and resources to university students, professors, federal agency staff, and even clinical researchers investigating infectious diseases.
- ✓ We are working with nonprofit organizations to develop citizen programs to monitor wildlife populations.
- ✓ Species have been relocated in many areas and also found in new, previously undocumented locations around the state. In many cases, these are positive indications of healthy populations.

These products have been instrumental in re-assessing mammal status in Wisconsin and have contributed greatly to Wisconsin's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan. In the near future, the knowledge gained through the Statewide Mammal Inventory will help us effectively manage a wider array of species.

Vigilance, combined with careful management of our wildlife and habitat resources, is the best approach to preventing population declines and potential listing. State Wildlife Grants make this possible.